

Apparatus and method for playback of optical recording media

The present invention relates in general to optical
5 recording media and, in particular, to an apparatus for
reading from and/or writing to optical recording media
capable of a playback of an optical recording medium based
on one single focus search cycle.

10 The developers of increasingly complex players or recorders
for optical recording media need to take into consideration
a plurality of different factors. Japanese Pat. No. 08-
303584 and 09-151031 disclose an optical recording media
device and a method for discrimination of optical recording
15 media where detailed description of the prior art and the
related prior art problems are included.

For example, optical recording media of the type CD-RW
(compact disk rewritable) have a reflectivity between 0.15
20 to 0.25 depending on the difference in structure of the
signal recording layer of each optical disc. Optical
recording media of the types CD-DA (compact disk digital
audio) and CD-R (compact disk recordable) have a
reflectivity which is by a factor of about 4 higher
25 compared to CD-RW media. Similar figures apply to DVD/DVD±R
(digital versatile disk (recordable)) and DVD±RW (digital
versatile disk rewritable). Generally speaking, the optical
recording media can be classified into high-reflectivity
and low-reflectivity media. In order to play back a
30 plurality of types of optical media which have different
reflectivity two basic methods are used by apparatuses for
reading from and/or writing to optical recording media in
the prior art.

According to the first method, media detection cycles are performed first and then, depending on the results, focus search cycles are run with settings according to the detected media. In the focus search cycles, the settings
5 for obtaining an optimum focusing condition of a light beam emitted by a laser diode are determined. According to the second method, the dedicated settings are chosen first and then focus search cycles alternate, wherein each cycle features either a dedicated high-reflectivity setting or a
10 dedicated low-reflectivity setting. Both methods require more than one search cycle, either two or more focus search cycles or one or more media detection cycles followed by a single focus search cycle. This causes an increased start-up time of an apparatus for reading from and/or writing to
15 optical recording media until playback or recording of the optical recording medium is possible. As a result, the delay caused by running multiple search cycles causes the apparatus' performance to be compromised. Accordingly, there is a need in the technology to overcome the
20 aforementioned problems.

The present invention solves the above-mentioned problems of the prior art, and provides an apparatus for reading from and/or writing to optical recording media, and a
25 method for distinguishing different types of optical recording media capable of reducing the start-up time, as well as playing back the information of a plurality of types of optical recording media in accordance with the type of the optical recording medium stably and accurately
30 after one single focus search cycle.

In order to accomplish the goal of successful and accurate playback after one focus search cycle, the focus search function is subdivided into a number of sequence steps,
35 wherein, while one sequence step is performed, not only the actual function of the step is run through but also the

characteristics that may be relevant for the following step are looked for. Thereby, this method speeds up the overall sequence. In particular, the system of the present invention includes an optical lens system and two separate amplifiers, one for a servo signal path and the other for a data signal path. When during the focus search cycle the absolute value of the focus error signal exceeds a given threshold, an S-CurveOK signal is emitted. When a focal zero cross is detected, the amplitude of a data signal RF before and after this zero cross is determined and compared with a threshold value. When it is larger than the threshold value, a FocusOK signal is emitted, it is deduced that the given medium is a high-reflectivity medium, and the settings for the high-reflectivity medium are kept; when the peak amplitude is smaller than the threshold value, the apparatus automatically switches to the dedicated settings for the low-reflectivity medium. The combination of focus error signal FE and data signal RF, therefore, allows to distinguish between the two types of optical recording media. Hence, only one focus search cycle is required to find the focus point for both high-reflectivity and low-reflectivity media. Thus, the start-up/detection time frames are substantially reduced. Consequently, the apparatus performance is enhanced due to the ability to detect the optical recording medium and to distinguish among a plurality of types of optical recording media in one single focus search cycle. By providing more than one threshold value it is further possible to distinguish between more than two types of optical recording media, i.e. high-, low-, and intermediate-reflectivity media. Furthermore, the method is favourably combined with a discrimination between different families of optical recording media, which can be based on other physical parameters of the recording media such as cover layer thickness or the like. For example, first a discrimination between CD- or DVD-type optical recording

media is done. Then the focus search function is started.
It is likewise possible to start the focus search function
first and two perform the discrimination between CD- or
DVD-type optical recording media afterwards. Of course, the
5 discrimination does not need to be limited to CD and DVD.
Other media like BD (Blu-ray disk) or future media formats
can also be included.

For a better understanding of the invention, an exemplary
10 embodiment is specified in the following description with
reference to the figures. It is understood that the
invention is not limited to this exemplary embodiment and
that specified features can also expediently be combined
and/or modified without departing from the scope of the
15 present invention. In the following reference is made to
optical recording media of the types CD-DA/CD-R and CD-RW
as examples for high- and low-reflectivity media. Of
course, as indicated before the invention is likewise
applicable to other types of optical recording media which
20 can be classified into high- and low-reflectivity media. In
the figures:

Fig. 1 is a block diagram illustrating a general
configuration of an apparatus for reading from
25 and/or writing to first and second types of
optical recording media according to a preferred
embodiment of the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a flowchart of a process describing a method
30 of the present invention;

Fig. 3 illustrates the comparison of the S-curve to the
threshold; and

35 Fig. 4 illustrates the data signal RF and the FocusOK
signal.

Fig. 1 is a schematic block diagram showing a general configuration of an apparatus for reading from and/or writing to optical recording media according to the present embodiment, wherein the reference numeral 100 denotes an optical recording medium inserted into the apparatus 118. The optical recording medium is irradiated with a light beam emitted by a laser diode 104 through an optical lens system 102. The light reflected from the surface of the optical recording medium again passes through an objective lens of the optical lens system 102. A photodiode element 112 comprising one or more photodetectors is used to convert the reflected laser light into electrical signals. After insertion of the optical recording medium 100 in the apparatus 118, or after power-up of the apparatus 118, a focus search cycle is executed which moves the objective lens in the vertical direction towards the optical recording medium 100 in an open loop manner allowing to focus the light beam on a reflective surface of the optical recording medium 100. A focus search hardware block 114 is sensitive to an absolute amplitude of a focus error signal FE, which forms a characteristic curve, the S-curve. The focus search is performed by applying a ramp signal to a focus actuator 110 and closing the focus control loop if the focal point is found.

The apparatus 118 further comprises two separate RF amplifiers, one for a servo signal path, amplifier 106, and one for a data signal path, amplifier 108. The two amplifiers 106, 108 can be configured in each case either for CD-DA/CD-R or CD-RW. The signals detected from the optical recording medium 100 are supplied to both amplifiers 106, 108 simultaneously. In addition, the signals are supplied to an optical recording medium distinguishing device 116, which is able to distinguish whether the inserted optical recording medium 100 is a CD-DA/CD-R, a CD-RW, or whether no optical recording medium

has been inserted. The type of the optical recording medium 100 is distinguished based on two types of signals: the focus error signal amplitude and also the amplitude of the data signal RF. An S-CurveOK signal indicates whether at all an optical recording medium is loaded. When the player has the CD-DA/CD-R settings and at the same time a FocusOK signal is active, this means that a CD-DA/CD-R medium is loaded. However, when the FocusOK signal is not active at the time when the S-CurveOK signal is received, the player deduces that a CD-RW medium is loaded. The S-CurveOK signal is derived from the focus error signal FE, which is calculated by a digital signal processor dedicated to the servo loop processing - Servo DSP 120.

The S-CurveOK signal becomes active when the focus error signal exceeds a first threshold and is deactivated when the focus error signal falls below a second threshold. The first threshold is somewhat larger than the second threshold, but both are not too far from the zero crossing point. The FocusOK signal is derived from the data signal RF and becomes active when the amplitude of the data signal RF exceeds a threshold. It is deactivated when the signal falls below the threshold. The thresholds can be adjusted in such a way that the expected signals are generated for the entire algorithm in order to make sure that the different optical media can be easily distinguished.

In other words, if a focus search is performed with the CD-DA/CD-R settings when a CD-RW medium is present in the apparatus, a certain signal relationship is calculated which allows to deduce the presence of a CD-RW medium even though the system is operated with non-CD-RW settings. Thus, when on the base of this knowledge the indication is received that the optical recording medium loaded into the apparatus is a CD-RW medium, the focus search cycle performed with the CD-DA/CD-R settings is abbreviated. A switching to the appropriate CD-RW settings is automatically performed during the same focus search cycle

operation, and not later in the next cycle like it was the case in the prior art. Hence, only one focus search cycle is required to find the focus point for both CD-DA/CD-R and CD-RW media.

5

Fig. 2 depicts a corresponding process in two flow charts. The first flow chart a) relates to the discrimination between only two types of recording media. In a step 200 a focus search cycle for the first type of optical recording medium is performed, wherein a focus error signal FE and a data signal RF are generated. In the next step 202, the focus error signal FE is compared to threshold values. Subsequently, a focal zero crossing based on the focus error signal FE is detected 204 and the amplitude of the data signal RF is compared to a threshold value. In the last step 206 the settings are adapted to an operation mode for the second type of optical recording medium, in case the amplitude of the data signal RF does not exceed the threshold.

20 The second flow chart b) relates to the discrimination between more than two types of recording media, i.e. high-, low-, and intermediate-reflectivity media. While the steps 200 and 202 are the same for both processes, in this case in a step 205 the amplitude of the data signal RF is compared to a plurality of threshold values. In the last step 207 the settings are adapted to an operation mode for the detected type of optical recording medium in dependence on which threshold the amplitude of the data signal RF does exceed.

30

Figure 3 shows the so called S-curve, which is detected during the focus search operation and which is derived from the focus error signal FE while moving the objective lens along a line between a position farthest from the optical recording medium and a position closest to the optical recording medium. Plotted is the signal amplitude A against

35

the lens position x . During moving toward and away from the measurement surface the zero cross point of the S-curve signal is detected. The amplitude 300, 304 of the signal before and the amplitude 302, 306 of the signal after this
5 zero cross are determined and compared with a threshold given by the first and second thresholds. The S-CurveOK signal becomes active when the focus error signal FE exceeds the first threshold and is deactivated when the focus error signal falls below the second threshold. The
10 first threshold is somewhat larger than the second threshold, but both are not too far from the zero crossing point.

Figure 4 shows the data signal RF 400, 404 and derived from
15 it the FocusOK signal 402, 406 when CD-DA/CD-R settings are applied during the focus search cycle. Plotted are the signal amplitude A and the logic level against the lens position x . The FocusOK signal becomes active when the amplitude of the data signal RF exceeds a given threshold
20 and it is deactivated when the signal falls below the threshold. There is a difference in the amplitude that can be observed for CD-DA/CD-R media and CD-RW media with CD-DA settings. When a CD-DA medium is loaded the RF signal 404 is larger than the threshold. When a CD-RW medium is
25 present, the RF signal 400 is lower than the threshold. Consequently, when the FocusOK signal 406 is active, this means that a CD-DA/CD-R medium is loaded. However, when the FocusOK signal 402 is not active, this means that a CD-RW medium is loaded.

30

Although the present invention has been described in detail with reference to certain preferred versions thereof, other versions are possible.